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1918

Practical Child Training



PART 6

HOW TO PREVENT
QUARRELING
TEASING
BULLYING
FIGHTING



Class HQ 769

Book B4

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Essential to show self-control in trying situations. If all mothers could smile instead of give way to temper in cases like this, children generally would be happier through life.

Principles involved: Suggestion (imitation).

Practical Child Training

PART 6

EASY LESSONS FOR TEACHING
SELF-CONTROL IN THE HOME

By

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LESSON 1

AIM

To teach a child to avoid anger.

DEFINITE INSTRUCTIONS

When your little child is in his most normal and quiet mood, have him stand at your knee and quietly say, "Do you want me to tell you a little story?" He will probably say, "Yes," for all children like stories.

"Very well. Once there was a little boy who was about your size. He was quiet and always had a smile for everyone. Everybody liked him. Whenever anyone said ugly things to him, what do you think he would do? He just said, 'All right,' and then smiled, which made the other person ashamed of himself for saying ugly things. Do you want me to tell you how you can be like that boy who

smiled? All right. Hand me that tablet and pencil there on the table. We will make a motto for you to put in your room."

Tear out a blank sheet and have the child write the following words as you dictate slowly: "I do not get angry. I smile instead. I control myself."

"Now, see if we can say it without looking on the paper." (Repeat the motto and then ask the child to say it after you.) Say, "That's very good—see if you can say it again. Fine! If I think about it, I will ask you in the morning and see if you can remember it."

COMMENTS

The lesson described above is a decided step in the right direction. No one, of course, would be foolish enough to think that one lesson, or even many lessons, of this kind could make a child always control himself properly. But there is no question but that, by giving him this lesson and talking about it one day after

another at proper times, being careful not to antagonize the child in the meantime, you can so influence your child's mind and character that it may be a valuable help to him in gaining self-control. The method described may be used on children anywhere between five and ten years of age.

USE ENCOURAGEMENT

You should be quick to recognize any effort toward self-mastery, no matter how slight its success. It is a good idea, whenever your child has shown self-control, to emphasize his act as a real victory. Not infrequently a child undergoes some special experience during which the notion of selfish indulgence is firmly lodged. Petulance, ill-temper and even anger are quickly aroused in such circumstances. The child becomes resistant and passionate.

EXAMPLE 1

As Mrs. Hudson sipped her coffee, she watched her little son of three years un-

tie, with precocious skill, some knots she had made in a piece of twine.

“What patient little fingers,” she sighed; “never was there such a boy to solve problems. I wish you would help mother to solve hers,” she added below her breath.

A minute later, her problem was strongly in evidence. She had ascended the stairs. From below came a wild shriek of something very like anger. Since a short illness of the child's in which he had been carried up the stairs he positively refused to go up by himself. His mother was trying to “break him,” hence the shrieks.

“I've tried everything, Mary,” wailed Mrs. Hudson to the maid who was making the beds. “What shall I do?”

Mary looked grim. “Well, if he was moine, mum, I'd give him something else to think about.”

Mrs. Hudson knew very well what Mary meant. She had not told anybody that when she was alone with the boy one day, she *had* tried the soft end of her

slipper. But it was futile, except to produce more screams. The words lingered, however; *give him something else to think about.*

She quickly drew some twine from a drawer and went down the stairs. Without a word, she began making knots between the newel and the wall rail. The boy watched her with the tears drying on his cheeks.

“See, son, nobody is allowed to pass here except the one who can untie these knots. You are the prince, and the sleeping beauty is upstairs. Now see if you can get her.” She went on up the steps.

After a time she heard the boy call, but she was conveniently deaf. She held her breath, though, as the youngster kept saying, “I find seeping booty—I find seeping booty!” and she strained her ears to catch the soft padding of little feet.

The voice came nearer, then, with a rush, triumphantly waving the cord, the boy trotted into the room. The joy of

achievement had driven the bugaboo off the stairs.

COMMENTS

Here a mother has tactfully carried her son over an important point in restoring him to his usual relations in the home. His tendency to ill-temper is not deeply ingrained; it is a temporary relapse which can be cured by substituting a desirable distraction at an opportune moment.

PARENTS' EXAMPLE

Here we come to the greatest point of all—your own example. Everyone who has had even a little experience with children knows the importance of example in child training. In other words, a child pays more attention to what you do than to what you say. But the purpose of this book is not merely to remind you of your responsibility; it seeks rather to present plans which, if followed, will make it easier for you to do your duty.

CRITICAL MOMENTS

A parent may be perfectly calm, all day long; everything may go along smoothly until after the evening meal, when, let us say, a dish falls in a crash. Suppose the dish falls at just seven o'clock. The mother is calm just before seven and also five minutes after seven, but mark this: she has an opportunity in those five minutes (between seven and five minutes after seven) to give her child a lesson in either self-control or unbridled passion which will influence him far more than her quietness during all the rest of the day. This point is very important. Many a mother gives her child impressive lessons in anger because she does not realize the importance of continued control. She considers that her greater number of quiet moments will more than offset the very few in which she shows her temper. But this is a mistake.

People say, in a joking way, that a certain boy is good—when he is asleep. The added clause suggests that he is *not*

a good boy. In the same way, a mother may not show temper when there is nothing to arouse it, but her influence upon the child is good or bad according to how she responds to the situation when the real test comes; when some provoking incident occurs or when some unusually annoying circumstance arises.

You need not wait long for an opportunity to give a lesson in self-control by example. Little annoying situations will frequently arise. As soon as the first one comes, say to yourself: "Here is a situation—here is an opportunity to give my child the best lesson that it is possible to give in self-control." Then show your child how to act.

BE OPTIMISTIC

Another thought which will help you greatly to strengthen both your own self-control and that of your child is this: whenever any lapse of more or less seriousness has occurred, it is too late to forestall it. The only logical thing for any

reasonable human being to ask is, "What is the best thing to do *NOW*, since this has already happened?" Always ask this question immediately after a mishap of any kind. Your answer, if wise, will give you self-control.

A child cries over spilt milk. He has not been taught self-control. Viewing it from an adult standpoint, this attitude appears to be pessimistic. The proper thing for a mother to do for the development of her child's self-control as well as her own is to talk about how nicely she can get along without the milk. To put the emphasis upon the thing that has happened, what a loss it was, etc., is pessimistic, and tends to arouse temper; but to put the emphasis upon the remedy to the situation is optimistic, reasonable, and the secret of self-control. "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch" is an example of genuine optimism.

THE CHILD'S MISFORTUNE

It is always best to assume the optimistic attitude not only in his material

losses, but also in case of serious accident in which your child is involved. Fault-finding, in itself, is useless, but when coupled with ill-temper, it is worse. To hold your child's confidence you must be reasonable. To talk about a remedy for the result of your child's shortcoming has much more effect and a more wholesome influence than to discuss his awkwardness or thoughtlessness. Do not be afraid that he will be more careless in the future unless you scold him. A normal child knows he has caused you to suffer loss as well as you do.

It may happen that something goes wrong for the child which does not arouse your temper, but which arouses and provokes him. Should you tell the child not to become angry? Certainly not. Divert his thoughts from the loss he believes he has sustained. Direct his mind to the positive side—the bright side. If he is angry, though his temper is not directed toward you, suggest calmly some way in which together you may be able to remedy the situation.

WHEN TO BE SILENT

However, if the child's ill-temper is directed toward you for some reason or other, be silent. Wait until his emotions have had time to subside. The mood will change naturally. After being silent for two or three minutes you may be able to start conversation on the right plane by asking some irrelevant question. Ask the question slowly and calmly. To ask any question concerning the thing about which the child was angry would in most cases result in a short, curt reply. Or, to ask an irrelevant question too soon would cause the child to be conscious of the fact that you are trying to get his mind off a mood which he has enjoyed "nursing," and this would only serve to anger him still further.

SARCASM

The use of sarcasm by parents is unnecessary and unreasonable—there is not

a thing to be gained by it. It is usually accompanied by a certain degree of anger. Sarcasm reacts upon the parent, destroying his finer sense of sympathy. The use of sarcasm, cutting remarks and certain willful expressions, such as "I won't" by children, is often caused by the parents' example. Of course, after the child starts to school, he will pick up such expressions from playmates and may try them out at home, when he is out of humor. But home standards can easily overcome outside influences.

When your child says something too hastily, be silent and let his conscience speak to him in your stead. It will do no good for you to answer hastily. On the contrary, so long as you talk against his actions, he will defend them.

Practice being silent. There is really more power in silence than most people realize. When a child knows that you must be displeased with what he has just said, there is surely no advantage in telling him so just then. Wait a little time before talking on the subject. Then,

you will be able to speak to him quietly with telling effect.

PATIENCE

Patience is a quality which every human being needs to possess in order to avoid being miserable a greater part of the time. By making use of the suggestions already given, your child will be well trained in this quality. When he is very young, the mother should make sure that she does not try his patience too much. Seconds to us often seem like minutes to the baby. The expression, "In a minute," should be used as little as possible. Of course, if it is not used too often, it may be of great advantage at times, when it is necessary to put off giving your child immediate attention.

HOW TO TEACH BABY TO WAIT

The first time you say, "Very well, in a moment," you should gratify the baby's wish almost at once; the next time you

should make it a point to have him wait just a few seconds longer, and the next time after that a few seconds more, and so on. The child will soon learn that the expression, "Very well, in a moment," indicates that you recognize his need and he will be cared for in a short time.

This constitutes the first lesson in patience. The child has a great provocation to cry, but realizing that what he wants is soon to come, he expectantly waits for it.

There are many different ways in which a child of five or six can receive lessons in patience. For example, one good way of cultivating patience in your child is to have him plant seeds in a box of soil. The seeds must be watered, and later the plant cared for by him at regular times. The child must watch carefully and wait patiently for results. You can keep up his interest by talking about the wonderful little plant, the little green leaves and the pretty flowers that will come out later.

Patience is very closely related to

temper, it is also a necessity to courage.

The subject of self-control is so important that a few more suggestions may be helpful to you when striving to control your temper in the presence of your children. In the first place, let us see why it is important to have self-control and decide whether or not the achievement is worth the effort.

ILL-TEMPER INFLUENCES CHARACTER

You can, to a certain extent, actually estimate an adult's character by the amount of bad temper he shows. The displaying of bad temper always shows degradation and no one can dispute the fact that to see his parents ill-tempered has a bad influence upon a child's moral nature. On the other hand, calmness and poise have their weight with any child.

EXAMPLE

"Katherine, see what you are doing, child. Is that the way to help mother?

Sewing a red flannel patch on Billy's white nightgown!"

Katherine, mature for her twelve years, knew very well what she was doing. She had not wanted to do the patching. Her dark eyes looked elfish. She did not answer.

In this sensitive atmosphere, the other children became restless. Billy whistled shrilly, and sharpened his pencil to shavings. Maudie reached out and pulled his hair. Little Beth, seated on the floor, yanked at her new picture book angrily, and jerked a leaf out. Whereupon Billy yelled, Maud jeered and Beth screamed.

"There, Katherine," protested her mother, "you see what happens when you are naughty. It upsets the children right away, because you have so much influence with them."

Katherine looked wicked and calmly continued her futile labor, making big, clumsy stitches.

"Katherine!" the mother began in an angry, choking voice, but she suddenly stopped, and bit her lip. Then she

stepped to her bedroom, entered, and locked the door.

Katherine's eyes followed her mother to the door, and one small shoulder went up in a shrug. A flush rose slowly to her cheek. She muttered sulkily:

"I know what she's gone in there for. She's gone in there to pray." She stabbed viciously at the red flannel patch.

Presently she dropped the nightgown on her knee, then she tossed it impatiently upon a table, wriggled a bit in her chair, and finally sprang to her feet.

"Oh, dear! I s'pose that prayer's got to be answered." She seized Billy's shoulder. "Look here, young man, you stop spoiling your pencil. Pick up those shavings as mother told you. I don't take to the moving pictures this afternoon any boy that doesn't mind his mother. Maud, you go and wash your hands, and take out those bastings, as mother said. Come, sit by sister, and we'll have a sewing society. Come, Beth darling, here's the mucilage and some paper. Sit by sister. She'll show you

how to mend the picture book. Come!"

After a time, the bedroom door opened, and the mother, with a look of sweet peace on her face, came out. Billy was doing his sums. Maud was pulling bastings and Beth held up her book, "All made new." Katherine, who was sewing with dainty stitches a neat muslin patch on Billy's nightgown, looked up with a merry, mischievous smile and returned her mother's kiss.

COMMENTS

The situation herein depicted is very common. The method of meeting the situation is not one that can be usually recommended. If the mother's habit of resorting to prayer be discovered by merest accident, then it is commendable. If there be no least effort to exhibit her resort to prayer, better yet.

Nearly every parent fails who holds any form of a religious club over the heads of children. But genuine religion, unostentatiously cultivated, is of ines-

timable value in giving a good tone to home life. It is this which gave the mother mastery of herself and so won for her a victory.

A child with "over-developed" temper will make an adult of small calibre. He will be easily stirred up, and as the result of being often angered, his whole face, and especially his mouth, will be disfigured. This is only an index to what has happened in his mind. Compare any number of children from homes where the parents often show ill-temper, and use angry words with the same number of children from other homes where the parents are controlled in manners and speech, and you can tell the difference between the two types of homes always in the countenances of the children.

ANGER OPPOSED TO SELF-INTEREST

Consider any two persons, young or old, in an argument, before a crowd. The one who keeps cool has the advantage over the one who shows temper, the

sympathy of the crowd being always with the one who is controlled. The reason is this: people like to see an angry spirit conquered; they like to see a kindly or friendly spirit rewarded.

We do not ask friendly favors of one who is angry with us. In business or in society we must keep the other fellow in the right mood if we wish success. Even little children, without ever hearing this point discussed by adults, learn to ask a favor of their father when he seems to be in a good mood, and avoid asking him when he does not seem to be in a friendly attitude.

Adults can go a step farther than the child and say kind things, thereby putting the other person into a good mood before asking a favor. If, instead of using kind words, we were to show anger, anger would provoke anger, and we would have little hope of making the person addressed act in a way favorable to our interests.

TEMPER INFLUENCES REASON

There is no such instrument as a "Temperometer," which would indicate the degree of ill-temper aroused in an individual at a particular time, but it is a fact, beyond a doubt, that the greater the degree of ill-temper in a person, the less capable is he of unbiased judgment. Your boy will go from your home into the world with a great handicap if he is unable to exercise self-control.

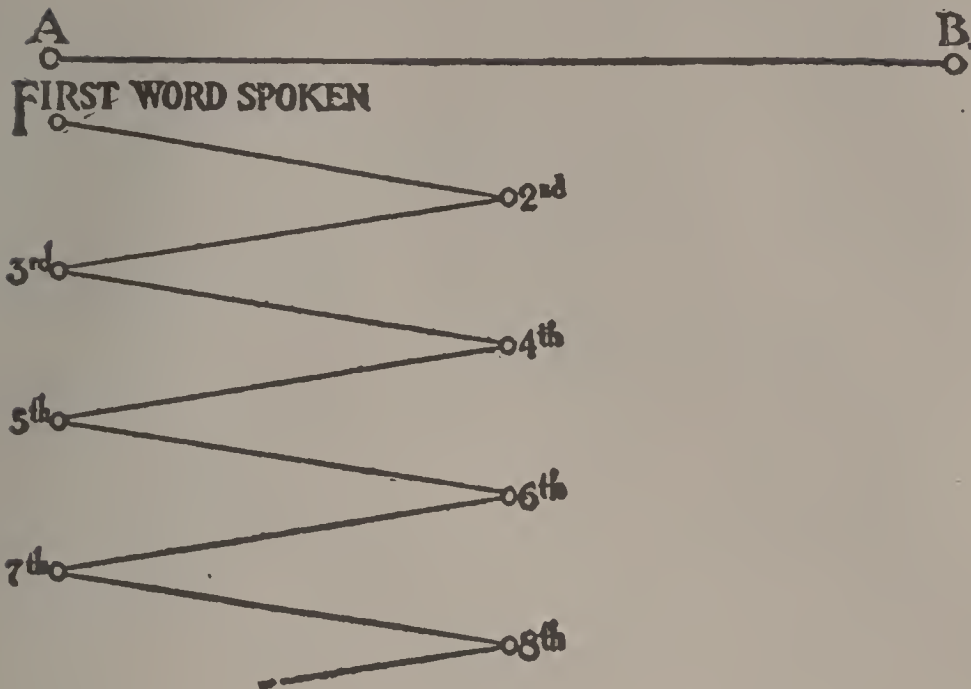
Take any conversation between two persons: let one of them show anger and the other will probably show his rage in his reply. The latter, by what he says, will excite more anger in the former, and so on. It is a downward "zigzagging" process so long as neither party exercises self-control. The following is a graphic description of a true concept and a helpful one always to keep in mind. [See diagram.] Let the line AB represent the high plane of reason and self-control. The figures in a zigzag line below indicate in order the word spoken by each

party. Odd numbered words are spoken by one party, and even numbered words by the other.

Now the question is: what should you do in the light of these facts? Suppose you are the party making the second, fourth, sixth and eighth statements. Each one of these words down in the zigzag line should be up on the high plane, represented by the line AB. Be calm and reasonable in every conversation. Thereby you will get the best possible practice in self-control. Never allow an exception to occur.

WATCH YOUR FIRST WORD

Here is another very important point. Make sure that the other person understands you. Many a conversation has "gone off on a tangent" because one interpreted another wrongly, and the latter, instead of correcting the mistake at the beginning, allowed himself also to be pulled downward along the zigzag line. No person, to whom it is worth your



time to speak at all, is going intentionally to try to stir you up if he is assured that you have a perfectly kind attitude toward him. Therefore, whenever anyone says anything to you that is not on the high plane AB, do not wait a single moment, but show your kindly feeling toward him at once.

HOW TO SET OTHER PERSONS RIGHT

This crucial incident in a conversation illustrates the exact manner in which a person can be set right. The talk turned to automobile efficiency. In speaking of a point which seemed to oppose the idea which he was advancing he replied, not at all in an outburst of temper, but with a tone, a voice and emphasis, which (referring to Diagram A) we would call step Number 1 in a zigzag line. Hardly allowing him to finish his reply, he was asked to "wait a minute—you did not understand me. There was no intention of speaking against you. I just wanted to get this straightened out in my own mind." The person to whom this was said replied, "Yes, I understand." But his tone of voice was different and remained on the high plane during the rest of the conversation.

It is needless to say that, between parents and children, conversation need never be carried on in anger. The search after more information about your child is a

worthy pastime, and there is nothing unreasonable about admitting that you are glad to hear how he views a certain fact. Let it flatter the child; it will not hurt him and it will help you. If you admit to him that you are willing to hear information from him, he will not only be more willing to give you the best he has, but, in case you have anything to tell him, he will also be in a good mood to appreciate it, and respect your judgment.

CONTROL YOURSELF NOW

To say "control yourself *now*," sounds meaningless. Most people think that the time to control themselves is when they are in the midst of temptation to anger, and that is the very reason that so many of them yield when temptation comes. Determine now, while you are in a reasoning mood, and while your brain is in a normal condition, to control yourself when the emergency does come. Prepare yourself for the first temptation to anger. Make up your mind not to

yield. Stay on the high plane always. Never allow yourself to go below it for an instant. A certain father, knowing that he was sometimes tempted to lose his temper, with his first waking thought each morning, resolved to master himself during the day just begun. His outbursts of anger became less and less frequent.

Often a person of melancholy temperament will, after hearing some cutting remark, brood over it for some time. Such a person should seek fresh air to breathe, and some other person of a pleasant disposition with whom to talk, until his nerves become perfectly normal. For this type of person, as well as all who are easily aroused, anger can be lessened by opening the hands, stretching out all the fingers straight, relaxing them consciously, keeping them in this position. The jaw should be relaxed, not allowing it to contract at all; one should breathe deeply and quietly, forcing a cheerful expression. It is very important that the relaxation be complete.

PROBLEM 1

“I have a daughter nine years old, who has the habit of complaining. She has a very sensitive disposition and she is forever grumbling about some ailment. If not that, it is something else. Please tell me how to overcome this tendency.”

SOLUTION

This child needs to have less attention paid to her when she complains. She should be neither scolded for complaining nor sympathized with in the least in regard to that about which she complains. When she makes a complaining remark, act as if you had not heard.

Keep her time filled with wholesome activity. Give her something else to think about besides her little imaginary ailments. Encourage her to play outdoors as much as possible and to take a great deal of exercise. Interest her in helping you with the housework.

Approve her a great deal both on how

much she is able to do for you and on how well she does the work. Talk and joke with her while working together so that she has a really good time. Be optimistic, yourself; your daughter gradually will become so. Watch for improvement and whenever you see any, tell her about it.

When a child follows its mother, whining and complaining, the natural impulse is to say: "Oh, my dear child, you just worry the life out of mother! Can't you sit down and be still a minute? Why don't you go outside and play a while?" But this only aggravates the habit. The positive method suggested is the only satisfactory one.

PROBLEM 2

"My three-year-old daughter has begun to be saucy. When I command her to do things, she 'sauces' me back. I have often told her not to talk back to me. But she is so determined. Did I not do the right thing?"

SOLUTION

Yes, you did the right thing, but perhaps not at the right time. And perhaps not in the right manner.

The impertinent child needs to be told not to talk back, but few parents understand how to tell him in a really effective way. It is natural to scold, which is worse than to be silent. It is also natural to speak to the child the instant after the offense, but this is not the right time.

When your child "talks back," say nothing at all for at least a few seconds after she has spoken. To wait two or three minutes is still better. Above all, act calmly. Have your daughter come directly in front of you; get her undivided attention. Then, very slowly and in a confidential way, suggest that, from now on, she is not to talk back when told to do anything. Tell her you simply will not permit it.

When you have told her what you expect of her in a quiet but impressive way, begin at once to show your friend-

liness. The natural thing for most parents to do is to keep the atmosphere cold, to appear independent and distant, but this is unwise from the standpoint of results. It would be folly of course to compromise in any way during the confidential talk. Let the talk be serious business from start to finish, giving the idea that you know precisely what you want and expect in the way of behavior. But hasten to show that your spirit is friendly. Do something or say something that signifies your friendly attitude.

You may be advised to ignore the saucy child on the theory that, if he gains nothing in the way of attention, he will discontinue it. You may also be told to let the child play alone a while as a natural punishment for her not being friendly when with others. Of course, the latter method might be used as a last resort in case the saucy attitude was displayed with other children. But neither of these methods is advised for general use. The best method is to tell the child

the proper way to act and to retain the closest friendship with her.

You as a parent must, in dealing with all habits in which temper is involved, observe two points closely. First, your child must be in good health—she must be properly fed and her bowels in good order. Second, she must not be allowed to see examples of the wrong attitude shown by adults (especially her parents), or by other children, any more than can be helped.

Give your children all the freedom they need in the field of permissible things, but stand up uncompromisingly for the highest ideals in child discipline. Only thus will you be doing the best for your child.

PROBLEM 3

“Ralph is almost four years old. When I refuse to do certain things, he hits me and says: ‘You are a mean mother,’ and various other undesirable things. How can I cure him of this?”

SOLUTION

First of all, see that he has no example of the wrong kind set before him, especially in your own home.

Now, in order to begin with the right method, let the first unkind word he uses pass uncorrected for an hour or so. Then take him out to play when you and he can be alone.

Have a romp with him for eight or ten steps (if this sport is decidedly pleasing to him) and when you stop, swing him out at arm's length around in a circle with his feet barely touching the ground. This or any other little dash of sport will put his mind into a receptive state, he will want to catch his breath: then, at a favorable moment, sit down—say on a porch step, have him sit down beside you for a minute and say, “Ralph, I wanted to tell you something”—pausing a moment before each of the following words—“just a little while before supper this evening, you said an unkind word to mother. Now, *after this*, I shall expect

you always to say kind words. I want you to grow up to be a big, fine gentleman. I do not want you to use unkind words. Whenever you ask mother to do something and she tells you what to do, you must either not say anything at all or else say, 'All right, Mother.' This is all I have to tell you. You understand what I have said." (At this point, stand up and speak more rapidly.) "All right, I guess I can play with you a minute or two. What shall we do—shall we play 'merry-go-round' again?"

You are to show no temper, but let the attitude of expectancy be dominant.

The aim is to stamp the suggestion indelibly upon the child's mind at a time when the child is in a mood to have this done. The dash of fun immediately following the talk is essential. It helps to seal the suggestion.

If, at any time, this child says an undesirable thing, even though it be very mild, look him squarely in the eye and say slowly, "Ralph, do you remember what we said yesterday about using kind

words? All right, be very careful." Don't allow an exception to pass; take him to task, kindly but insistently, every single time that he errs. When he sees that you are not going to endure it, he naturally will give up the habit.

A child treated in this way when young has something to be exceedingly thankful for in years to come.

QUARRELING

NATURE AND CAUSES OF QUARRELS

Quarreling is a product of ill-temper; another proof that self-control is a most important virtue. Whatever we have said in respect to self-mastery has maximum value in considering the vice of quarreling.

Parents should give up the idea that quarrels are necessary in the life of children. There has been an old conviction that every boy and girl must "have measles, chicken-pox, mumps, etc.," and that quarreling among children is unavoidable; both doctrines are without foundation. Mental and physical strength are dependent, for the ordinary child, strictly upon the care given by his parents.

One who studies this Course with a conscientious purpose to profit from it by helping his children win more moral vic-

tories, will at once cease to drift in the sea of foolish notions.

CAUSES OF QUARRELS

Quarrelsomeness is due to unguided, instinctive attitudes toward other persons. When a child meets opposition to his choices, several responses may be made in effort to settle the issue: he may yield gracefully or submit with injured feelings; on the other hand, he may resist without losing his temper, or he may become angry and so make a passionate effort to gain his point, or he may impose some restraint on his passion and argue the case with malicious words in an angry mood.

Quarrels are combats of words in which ill-temper overrules the parties engaged. While quarrels often lead to fighting, they are at the same time a substitute for fighting, adopted as a more or less hopeless means of attaining a given end.

Quarrels are the customary resort of

persons who have ill-regulated passions, with no certain method of amicably adjusting their differences. Adults who belong to the uneducated, uncultivated levels of society appear to delight in quarrels; children are acting on a low level from which maturity has not yet raised them when they habitually resort to quarreling.

The instinct to defend one's rights, to enforce one's will, to compel submission, in a word, the instinct to fight one's way through all opposition, lies at the basis of quarreling. This instinct cannot be eradicated; it exists in every child and in every adult; worthy ideals of conduct, or fear of community disapproval, may lead to the suppression of impulses to quarreling, but yet it remains as a part of human nature.

A disposition to quarrel may be provoked into action by several distinguishable causes in the case of children. If these provocations occur often the child will form the habit of quarreling, that is, he will resort to the quarrel frequently

for small reasons, and acquire a special tendency toward ill-feeling when annoyed by his fellows.

WHEN THE QUARRELING HABIT STARTS

The habit of quarreling generally begins either when the parents are absent or at least out of the children's sight. The children allow the zigzag of verbal provocation to operate between them with the result that usually one of the party screams and discloses the state of affairs. Sometimes the habit starts through association with a neighbor's child who has not been properly trained, and is therefore extremely selfish and quarrelsome. School experiences never fail to teach children undesirable standards respecting prolonged disputes.

Quarreling is nearly always caused by a misunderstanding about possessions. Two children want the same plaything. They have not enough judgment to find some ground of agreement so that the interests of both can be preserved.

Occasionally a child reports another's misconduct, thus provoking disagreement and a quarrel. If the report is in the least erroneous, the motive suspected, or for no just reason at all, the child aggrieved may launch into a tirade of accusation, a reply of some sort being all that is needed to constitute a typical quarrel.

Not infrequently property held by the family in common and used by the children in turns, occasions disputes and quarrels. The difficulty is traceable to lack of system and general mismanagement.

PARENTAL DISAGREEMENT

The most fatal cause for quarrels in children is a repeated disagreement between father and mother or parent and child. A general census of family conditions has never been taken. Occasionally reports are current that in certain homes husband and wife never seriously disagree. Happy are the children in such homes. Disagreements need not be quar-

rels, although many fathers and mothers resort to the childish quarrel. No hot-tempered parent has the right to use harsh methods to cure the quarrels of his children. Parents bear the chief blame for passionate disagreements in their flock. Let them first cure themselves.

The Ekoi of South Africa hold the tradition that babies will not stay in homes where there are quarrels and discord. It is the rule, therefore, to cease from all expressions of anger and impatience in the presence of the little children. We have made no gain in advancing from superstition to civilization, if, by inconsiderate frankness in respect to showing our children how violent and foolish our ill-temper may become, we incite disputes due to their insistent imitation.

MISTAKEN REMEDIES

In writing about children, it has been proposed to let two children quarrel at times, in the interest of mutual justice. This is unnecessary, if not absolutely

harmful, and certainly fatal if one hopes to cure the quarreling habit. Observe two children quarreling over some object. They do not thoughtfully and finally decide the dispute in favor of justice; the more stubborn child holds on to the object, or the one with greater strength secures it. With children, it is a question of getting the object, and not a question of justice. The longer they are allowed to quarrel, the less they think of what is right.

Of course, when the parent interrupts tactlessly and without question decides the quarrel for the children by giving the object to one or the other, it is a serious blunder. To go to the other extreme and hear all that a child would like to say about his side of a quarrel (for example, "he struck me," and "he pulled my hair," and "he pinched me") is equally unnecessary. The correct method can be easily mastered and applied.

The great reason why children should not be permitted to finish a quarrel is on

account of its giving them practice or exercise in fault-finding, unfriendliness, selfishness and, above all, ill-temper.

TALKING ABOUT QUARRELS

Perhaps no misconduct more often tempts parents to indulge in too much talking than do quarreling and fighting. Such behavior is nerve-racking and distracting in the extreme. It is under these conditions that a parent is the least likely to say the right thing. Hence well-advised parents avoid falling into the useless habit of ineffectual complaints, scolding and threats.

It is a great mistake to remind a child of his mood, especially to find fault with him. Did you ever hear a parent say, "I'd be ashamed of myself, children," and then observe the effect upon those children? If you did, here is what you found: it caused them to keep it up longer because they were not in the mood to be ashamed, but inclined to tease each other.

If children were observing some other children quarreling and were reminded at that time that it was a babyish practice, the thought might have a good effect, but to discuss the matter with the child or ridicule him while he is in the abnormal state of temper, is simply to antagonize him.

In many homes, entirely too much emphasis is put upon good behavior. It is unwise for father to come home and ask, in the presence of the children, whether they have been "good." It is much better for the father to assume that their conduct has been commendable.

If a mother urges her children to desist from quarreling on the ground that father will inquire as to their conduct during the day upon his return from the office, it must necessarily have a negative effect.

You are buying obedience by threats. You also risk destruction of the children's love for their father by making him supreme arbiter of their destinies.

METHODS OF DEALING WITH QUARRELING

The following methods of dealing with a quarrelsome disposition are founded upon several factors, among which lack of self-control is basic. This lack may be caused by a child's physical condition, for when a child's digestion is upset, or when he has been deprived of sleep, his whole nervous system is "on edge."

PROVIDE CHILDREN WITH SAME KIND OF TOYS

Perhaps the most common cause of quarrels is dispute about the use of playthings. If very young children are to play together, provide them with the same kind of toys. To give one child a locomotive and the other a set of books might bring no relief if they are disposed to be quarrelsome. If both want the locomotive, provide each child with one, or else keep the one locomotive out of their reach and away from their atten-

tion. Let both play with their blocks. Of course after your children are older and you have had an opportunity to train them in the folly of jealousy, then you need not resort to this method, as they will learn to play together in peace.

In case a younger child is disposed to quarrel with an older one, do not compel the older child to hand over his plaything to the younger, because the latter wants it—perhaps even cries for it. Respect the older child's sense of justice. When the younger child cries, "I want it, give it here," say to him, "This train belongs to brother. Stop crying and say, 'Please.' Brother will let you have it a little while, I am sure, and then you will give it back to him."

After brother's rights are acknowledged by yourself and the younger child, and you have intimated that he will very soon have the train back again, he will not object to giving up the train. This act of parting with the toy of his free volition and the act of saying, "Please," on the part of the younger child mean

that you have given both children a good lesson in self-control.

In case the toy in dispute belongs to neither child, step up to the children and firmly say, "Give me the —— (object); now you may each have it for two minutes. Jane may have it now for two minutes and then Jack may have it for two minutes." Be firm. Do not allow Jack to interrupt Jane for two minutes and then when the two minutes are up say, "Now it's Jack's turn. Hand it to Jack, and Jack will say, 'Thank you.'" The object can be passed back and forth in a similar way two or three more times after very short intervals and the children will have received a good lesson.

DIVERT THE ATTENTION

Bluntly to command children playing "Authors" to cease their quarreling and take up some other game would only make them more stubbornly resistant to your efforts; but, by ignoring the fact

that a quarrel is imminent or perhaps begun, you may, to the advantage of both yourself and children, tactfully divert their attention to some urgent "task" in which you "need their help." This task a wise parent will make as amusing as possible.

LESSON 1

AIM

To avert a threatened quarrel when the children are in a state of ill-temper and irritability; or to suppress a dispute already begun.

PREPARATION

Select a task that needs immediate attention, as, for example, the arrangement of the furniture in its proper order.

DEFINITE INSTRUCTIONS

Make no mention of the cause or subject of the quarrel or of the state of mind

of each child. Ignore every feature of the disagreeable situation and direct their minds whole-heartedly to the new opportunity for amusement.

Name each chair and article of furniture that is to be placed in a new position with names commonly applied to horses, and request each child to lead or drive them to their proper places.

Where convenient, have two children join in the management of a "horse." Commend them for their skill and express your satisfaction in the effect of the new arrangement.

COMMENTS

We have recommended the method of substitution. Younger children and even those of twelve and fifteen years of age do not often become so deeply engrossed in their disagreements that they will not respond to some such plan as that suggested above. Children rarely become fond of quarreling, even though they find some low sort of satisfaction in it. You

may count on being a welcome intruder to one or both parties to the strife.

We recommend very little conversation with children on the matter of quarreling. Urgings and explanations, pleadings and citations of examples are means of reform difficult to manage. Naturally, wise selection of reading matter for those who read will bring into view biographical material that no doubt will reinforce your methods of dealing with quarrelsomeness.

Parents sometimes say, "Children, you seem cross this afternoon; let's sing something." There is positively no advantage in such a remark.

The diversion must be introduced naturally and be interesting in itself. Mother or father have all the advantage, as they can think out their plan while the children are engaged and choose a suitable method of proposing it.

A SUGGESTED PROCEDURE

Let us take an instance of two children anywhere from six to twelve years of

age, who are quarreling with each other. Say to the older one, "Come here, John." After he comes to you, pause several seconds; do not appear to be annoyed by the quarrel at all. Say calmly and slowly, "Would you like to go shopping with me this afternoon? Very well, I want to get several things. We will start directly after dinner; what is it that sister wants? All right, let her play with it a while. Maybe you can help her to play and have a good time."

The purpose in the method described is to divert the child's attention from quarreling, not to find fault, but to put a thought into his mind which will make the object of the little quarrel seem insignificant. After considering how fine it will be to have the privilege of going on a trip, the thing for which the younger child was crying now seems unimportant.

It is entirely possible to give a child a preventive lesson when he is not involved in a quarrel. The following plan is adapted to a boy or girl of an age between six and twelve years.

LESSON 2

AIM

To teach a child self-control and to smile while another person frowns.

PREPARATION

Place an ordinary stool near a comfortable rocking-chair.

DEFINITE INSTRUCTIONS

When your boy is in a good mood say, "Come here, George—let's play a game." Sit down in the big rocking-chair and place the stool directly in front of you about four feet away. Have the child sit on the stool while you explain the game. Say, "Now the one sitting on this chair must smile and the one sitting on the stool where you are must frown and try to keep the other person from smiling. You be 'it' first. If I forget and frown, too, then I must be 'it' and you will have to sit in this big chair and smile.

“Now let’s try it—you pretend you are frowning real hard and try to get me to quit smiling. That’s it.” When the boy first frowns, you look straight up and smile, but in just a few seconds you are to “forget” and frown. Immediately put both hands up to your mouth and say, “Oh, there I frowned. Now you have to sit in the big chair—now you must keep smiling all the time.”

When you first sit on the stool, make a face that looks funny rather than angry, so that the child will laugh at your face. Then encourage him. Say, “My, I can’t make you frown at all. I am afraid you will keep my chair all the time.” Make another funny face, having your lips protrude and your eyebrows drawn down; modify this to a really angry look, but do not keep it that way more than a few seconds. Before you “give up,” say, “I don’t believe anybody can make *you* frown.” Arise and say, “We will have to play that again sometime, won’t we?”

Be sure to quit the lesson before the

child is ready to stop, so that he will want to play it again. Because you encouraged him so much he will like to play the game again another time. Being able to smile while another person frowns is the point of the lesson. By encouraging the child's belief that he can keep from frowning if he will, you will develop in him a marked degree of self-control.

At the end of the second or third lesson, you might add another thought, as for instance, "My, I am getting proud of you! I don't believe any of your friends, no matter how much they frown, can make *you* frown."

CREATE SENTIMENT AGAINST QUARRELING IN CONVERSATION

Indirectly, bring up the matter of quarreling, apart from any actual quarrel among the children; by skilfully manipulating the conversation, the number of pointed and emphatic statements they will make is often surprising. Make these occasions of nursing opinions, not

of parental moralizing. If the children can be brought openly and strongly to condemn quarreling a few times, the result will instantly appear in the weakening of their impulse to resort to the foolish practice. This method is a wise use of suggestion, but it calls for considerable delicacy on the part of the parent.

EXAMPLE 1

Two boys on a farm were bantering each other as to which could "throw" the other. One remark led to another, until they were soon wrestling very roughly. The father smiled and said in a slow, deliberate way, "Now don't let yourselves get mad, boys." He said this in such a tone that the boys were both influenced by it. Had he told them they ought to be ashamed of themselves for getting rough, or if he had intimated that they were angry already, they probably would have hurt each other badly before they could be separated. There

was a definite assumption that the boys were using self-restraint and were capable of exercising full power over their instinctive combativeness.

SEPARATE QUARRELSOME CHILDREN

Sometimes it is wise to separate a quarrelsome child from his playmates. Such segregation reduces friction between them when they again are brought together. A child, by this method, may be made to realize that it is far better to play peacefully with other children than to suffer the pangs of solitude.

EXAMPLE 2

Ida, aged five, seemed to quarrel continually. One day Albert said:

“Come on, Ida, let’s play outdoors.”

“Oh, I don’t want to run, I want to play with my doll.”

“Dolls are nothing,” said Albert as he stepped over to where one lay and held it up by its hair.

"Albert, you'll hurt her," moaned Ida. "I'll show you how it feels to pull hair!"

"No, you don't." Albert's jaw was set and his hands clenched, while he confronted his angry sister.

Mrs. Leavitt entered the room and understood at once the meaning of the postures. "I have decided to make a change in your play this afternoon, children," she said. "Albert, you may stay in the sitting-room here or play out-of-doors on the south side of the house using the front door only. Ida, you may play in the dining-room or on the north side of the yard and use only the side door. Each of you must play alone, just as you like, with nobody to bother you."

Quiet reigned at the Leavitt house that afternoon. Smiles were exchanged now and then between the children. At twilight Ida said, "May we play together now, mother?" When permission was given she said, "Albert, let's play out-of-doors."

"All right," said Albert, "bring your doll along if you want to."

A rested look appeared on Mrs. Leavitt's face.

LESSON 3

AIM

To cure a mischievous child who is in the habit of provoking quarrels.

DEFINITE INSTRUCTIONS

Watch for an occasion when the quarrelsome child has made open efforts to create a disturbance. Enter upon the scene in a kindly mood, with no words of warning. Speak individually to each of his playmates and send them to another room or out-of-doors to engage in another game or diversion which you have definitely planned for them. Leave the troublesome child alone. Insist firmly that he remain out of the group during the next game, and that no equal or superior substitute for the joys of the other children be provided for him. He is to experience the discomfort of solitude.

If the case is a very mild one, the following method may be effective: walk over to the child who is provoking the trouble, take hold of his arms (if necessary to hold his entire attention on you) and looking straight into his face, ask this question slowly and firmly, "John, do you want to remain in this room any longer?" He will probably give the answer, "Yes." Then say, "All right, you must treat every boy and girl kindly." Smile, let go of his arms and watch him go back to play for five or ten seconds, then leave without looking back.

Find out to a certainty if he has yielded to your command. Allow no subsequent misbehavior to become noticeably aggravating; divert his attention in the very beginning of trouble, so that he may become once for all convinced that his annoyances are not going to be tolerated.

COMMENTS

A parent must realize his child's viewpoint even as he must understand the thoughts of a neurotically "despairing" high-school girl.

The exceptionally quarrelsome child acts on the assumption that his will power is insufficient to gain his ends without a backing of blustering words to reinforce it.

There is at the bottom of the child's mind a settled conviction that his word should be law and his caprice the invariable rule for the "other fellow." He takes a superficial delight in contests with other wills; but he spends so much time in moodiness and harsh talking as really to mar most seriously his own pleasures. The cure is isolation. If his wilfulness had no restraint, he would in a short time drive all his playmates from him. The parent is bringing to bear on him some of the consequences of his own policy—results he cannot foresee, but to which he will respond when they are

brought to bear on him with tact and firmness.

The aim of this Course is to uphold preventive methods, eliminating all likelihood of future quarreling. By instilling right ideas at the proper time and by indirectly applying the preceding lessons to specific cases, a parent may succeed in mastering a child's naturally quarrelsome disposition.

More permanent results may be achieved by a thorough study and application of the lessons in health, love and courtesy which will be found in ensuing volumes of this series.

PROBLEM 1

"How can I get my children to be happy together all the time, or is that too much to ask of them? Our little girl seems jealous whenever brother talks to the baby. It always ends in screaming and unkind words. Please tell me how to deal with this dreadful quarreling."

SOLUTION

You ask if it is too much to expect your children to play happily together at all times. Of course, children will not always get along with each other without parental direction. But you should expect them to play together happily in the sense that you will not permit them to play otherwise.

The proper way to deal with quarreling, as a rule, is to give all the children in your home the idea that you will not tolerate it for a minute. When the first ugly word is spoken, or the first contradiction is made, call one or both children to you immediately and, without scolding, tell them calmly and in a friendly way that they must both be kind to each other. If you carry out this idea consistently, you will be rewarded later by seeing your children get along together. Always make it a point, soon after telling the children to be kind to each other, to say something or do something which will make both children happy.

Treat teasing and expressions caused by jealousy in the same way as you were advised to treat quarreling. Never allow an undesirable expression to be made without telling the child in a friendly way that you do not wish him to repeat it. This will be sure to have a good effect if you have the child's confidence.

PROBLEM 2

“What can I do to stop my ten-year-old daughter and my twelve-year-old son from quarreling? They are at it continually.”

SOLUTION

Sometime, just after you have planned a little trip with your daughter, or when she is in good spirits, speak very confidentially to her and ask a favor of her in this manner: “I want you to help me with brother. He has been developing a temper lately and I want to help him to control himself. Sometimes I catch myself saying things to him which make

him angry and I am going to try to watch myself more closely. And I want you to help me, too. Let us both be careful not to say anything to him that will make him lose his temper. Will you help me as much as you can? All right. I know we can help him overcome his temper if we do this for a while. Of course, neither of us will tell him that we have this arranged, but we will carry out the plan."

After you get your daughter to agree to co-operate with you in this way, your problem will be largely solved. If you find it necessary, you can deal with the boy in a similar way. After you have shown him some special consideration, get him to co-operate with you in treating his sister kindly.

Whenever you see any indication that a quarrel might begin, quickly "nip it in the bud" if you can. That is, say something—no matter what—just so it is something to divert their minds. For example, you might ask one of the children a question or call their attention to

something which will take their thoughts away from quarreling.

Children quarrel only when they have time for it. Therefore, keep your children busy with whatever is of interest to them. Furnish the boy with hammer and nails to make some flower boxes for you and then approve the workmanship. Likewise, furnish the girl with materials for whatever work you know will be interesting to her.

Too often, when children begin to quarrel, we hear the parents say something like this: "Children, children, when will you ever learn to play together? I never saw such children for quarreling in my life! Now, Robert, hand that over to Esther at once and don't bother me again." Such remarks, if they have any effect at all, actually make the habit worse, through suggestion.

The proper method is that described because it is based upon confidence. You co-operate with the child and get the child actually to exert self-control in order to help the other child.

TEASING, BULLYING AND FIGHTING

They only the victory win
Who have fought the good fight and have
vanquished
The demon that tempts us within.

—*Story.*

TEASING, BULLYING AND FIGHTING

TEASING

Teasing in the child is perfectly normal but not desirable. The teasing child may annoy other children as well as his parents.

Let us consider, first, the child who teases others besides his parents. What is the cause of this habit? The answer is easily suggested by the actions of a dog with a tin can tied to its tail. If dogs were to remain perfectly quiet and would not jump around, a boy would find no pleasure in tying tin cans to their tails. The same reason holds for the teasing of children. It is the reaction, the sudden outburst of anger, of retaliation on the part of the one teased that interests the boy.

CORRECT REMEDY FOR PINCHING OR BITING

The small boy does not realize the discomfort or pain which he causes others. This fact suggests the remedy for the child who has the habit of pinching or biting other children. In this case it is well to have such a child experience similar pain. When a child under six years old pinches his younger sister, have him come to you, then say, "Now I will show you how it feels." Pinch yourself once or twice gently about the same place that this child pinches the other; then, turn to the child before you, pinch him hard enough to make him wince, but not hard enough to make him cry, after this say, "It hurts, doesn't it? Now you must be careful not to pinch sister after this."

HOW TO AVOID BEING TEASED

Teasing may not involve physical pain, but may involve words designed to pro-

voke others. The remedy for a child who teases others by "making faces," or doing little annoying things, is to prepare the children usually teased by telling them how to respond. Urge them not to pay any attention to the child who tries to tease.

To illustrate this idea of paying no attention, watch the boy at school who teases little girls by untying their hair ribbons. The girl who either pays no attention or if she does pay attention, simply looks disgusted without showing any action, will not be annoyed very often, if at all, afterwards. It is the girl allowing the boy's teasing to exasperate her who interests him, and she is the one constantly annoyed.

TEASING PARENTS

The average child easily forms the habit of teasing or nagging his parents for certain privileges. This is due to two reasons: first, idleness. Keep your child busily occupied, and he will not have

time to tease or even to think about teasing. If your child is working and teasing at the same time, it is logical to conclude that he is not interested enough in his work. The second cause for teasing parents is a lack of decision or firmness on the part of the parents. The mother who, in a whining tone of voice, says, "Don't tease all day long. Don't argue and argue. Don't worry the life out of mother, etc.," suggests the very thing she desires to avoid. In other words, such a tone of voice suggests weakness on the part of the mother. The child naturally takes advantage of this and continues to tease.

COAXING

Never tease or coax a child yourself. Never say, "Won't you please be a good girl and come here?" This not only suggests weakness on the part of the parent but also implies that the girl was bad until the parent spoke. This always has an ill effect. Make use of the important principle used in teaching obedience—the

principle of expectancy. By doing this, your children will learn that your first decision is final, and that further appeal is useless.

On one occasion, a father lifted his little five-year-old son high into the air. He did this two or three times and then started to go into the house. The following dialogue was heard:

Son: "Do it some more, daddy."

Father: "No, I'm tired."

Son: "Yes, just once more, daddy, just once more."

This father had the opportunity of giving his son a lesson either in favor of teasing or one that would tend to keep the child from this habit in future, but unmindful of this fact, he rewarded his little son's teasing by tossing him again. This taught the boy how to gain his point in the future.

THE BETTER WAY

It is wiser for you to anticipate the teasing and warn your child beforehand

that at a certain time or after a certain number of repetitions you will stop. Then, when the child says, "Again," call his attention calmly but firmly to the agreement, implying by your attitude that to do the thing again would be entirely out of the question. It is not necessary that you give a reason for quitting; without discussing the situation with the child, decide when you will stop and let your actual assertion be the reason. You are granting him a favor, and as a consequence it is your privilege to set a limit to your indulgence. Not only are reasons unnecessary, but they give the teasing child an opportunity to propose postponement of the duties which you name as your excuse.

PROBLEM

"Do you think teasing is an unavoidable fault in a boy? My eight-year-old boy wants to be doing something I don't want him to all the time. And he is never satisfied with 'No' for an answer. He

insists upon worrying me by his repeated requests and remarks.”

SOLUTION

No, teasing is not an unavoidable fault in a child. Your boy's habit of teasing doubtless was started—and continues to operate—as a result of your own method of treating his requests.

In the first place, it is not natural for your boy to be inactive: He will insist upon doing something. Help him to occupy his time in a wholesome way by friendly suggestions as to what to do. It need not be work that is useful from an adult standpoint. Making a kite, a squirt-gun or a miniature airship is as good for a boy of this age as anything you can have him do.

Show an enthusiastic interest in your boy's positive accomplishments. Don't be backward about commending his work just because it doesn't compare favorably with that of adults. Remember, he is a mere boy. Approve his best efforts in a

positive and earnest way. Then, when he comes to you with a request, grant it if you possibly can do so at all. Give him the idea always, both by your attitude at the moment and by the large number of requests which you grant, that you like to favor him.

Whenever you grant a request, don't do so half-heartedly. Take all possible advantage of the occasion to show your friendly attitude toward him. Say something like this: "Yes, you may go out there for an hour or so, until I call you. If I can do anything to help you out, let me know."

By showing such a friendly attitude in regard to most of your boy's requests, he will not be so likely to question you when a request is not granted. In fact, he may not say anything at all. But, if he should, don't let him change your decision. If he never succeeds in winning you over on a single occasion, he will no more think of repeating his request than he would of talking to a lamp-post.

If you find it necessary, or, if you wish

quicker results, simply tell the child in a friendly, confidential manner that, in the future when a request cannot be granted, you will expect him to say nothing about it.

No amount of complaint or nagging about this habit of teasing will ever cure it. But, by executing the plan outlined, the problem will effectively be solved.

BULLYING

Bullying is merely an exaggerated form of teasing, so what has been said about one applies to the other. Of two boys, the older is generally the one who does the "bullying." He takes a delight in directing and commanding others. The most wholesome thing you can do for such a boy is to place him in the company of boys who are old enough to take their own part.

In case you have a boy who has a tendency to domineer in the family, and who does not show this tendency when away from home, the best cure is sepa-

ration from the one he is trying to bully. By consistently taking the younger one away when he attempts to bully, and showing him how the latter can help him play certain games when he plays properly, you will be doing the best thing possible to further his cure.

FIGHTING

Fighting at school is the natural result of quarreling at home. If you train your boy to control himself at home, he will not be forever "scrapping" at school.

You will have practically no difficulty in the home with a child who fights while under four years of age, but after the age of four a child may begin to use more strenuous methods. The cure for this condition is the same as that suggested in the case of bullying. Remove the child whom he strikes, and do not allow him to play with that child until you feel he can control himself.

On account of the lack of practice in

self-control and his failure to adapt himself to the will of others, an only child almost invariably has trouble in the first few years at school. He may whip and be whipped several times before he reasons that there are really others besides himself to be satisfied and who have a right to their independence.

WHAT TO TELL A BOY ABOUT FIGHTING

Make sure that your boy at school knows precisely what you think about fighting. Let him understand that if any boy should intentionally strike him and try to hurt him, that it might be permissible for him to defend himself by striking back if necessary. The occasions where the boy would be justified to strike should be specified by the parent. For example, "When a bully attacks you, presumably for the purpose of 'downing' you, you have cause to defend yourself. But to fight with another boy just to prove your greater physical strength is cowardly. If a question of honor is in-

volved you should not fight unless you are attacked."

PARENTS MUST AGREE

One parent must not tell the boy to fight while the other tells him never to fight under any circumstances. This is confusing and harmful in more than one way. Both parents must agree in advising a child. It is not wise to go to either extreme in advising the boy about fighting. One is almost as bad as the other. The happy medium, or the plan suggested, is the best because it is reasonable and therefore seems so to the boy.

NEVER FIGHT OVER WORDS

It is absurd to start to fight over some small disagreement, or even on account of an insulting remark. If your child develops into the type of man that you want him to be, knowing how to control himself, he must be trained to overlook those things which, later, must be re-

garded as "small matters." In your home, show a decided indifference to minor things, such as disparaging remarks reported to have been said about you; do not ask further questions about them; say merely, "Oh, that's a small matter," or, "Oh, I guess that is not going to hurt anybody." Then smile and change the subject.

There should be conversations at home about fighting. A boy rarely comes up to a fight without premonitions. Have it understood that all such matters are to be fully discussed at home. It may be easy to show that a fight will not really settle the differences between two boys.

Be careful to distinguish between the several types of "fights." A small child will report a "fight" in which there was only bad temper with no real conflict. Wrestling may degenerate into fighting; a bully may wantonly attack an innocent child.

A boy should assuredly fight in defense of a smaller child. To forbid all fighting is to make a manly lad a mere

“sissy,” incapable of upholding right, if need be, by physical means.

This distinction can be easily understood by all children old enough to discuss their conduct. Parents first should heartily accept the doctrine that a child at one age may need to yield to his instinct to fight and at another should be trained to repress it. Then they can, as occasion requires, show just how far the child may go in self-defense and in righting wrongs by physical measures.

If a boy finds a spirit of chivalry in the unvarying standard of conduct in his home, he will sense, ordinarily, the right time for interference by fighting. He will see that love alone settles disputes.

For older boys who are exceedingly athletic and at the same time pugnacious, the boxing gloves are a very sure remedy for ungoverned impulses to fight. What cannot be suppressed can be directed toward a harmless expression.

A father in Winfield, Kansas, has kept his sons' regard and love, has given them

the very best of physical culture and has trained them to be gentlemen when disagreements with their fellows arise. He uses boxing gloves. He wrestles with them and keeps the record of athletic achievements made by all three.

PROBLEM

“What shall I tell my boy about fighting? He is twelve years old and wants to be scrapping with someone continually. How can I cure him of this habit?”

SOLUTION

It would be well, first of all, to get a pair of boxing gloves. Talk about it a few days beforehand, of course, to get the boy anxious for them. As soon as you get the gloves, take it for granted that you are to manage their use.

Do not let the boy have them out of the box all the time. On the contrary, set aside a definite time in which you and he will have fun with them. Arrange to

have at least three or four neighbor boys in during these periods and you personally supervise the play. See to it that their bouts are executed in the best spirit possible.

Just after a couple of boys put on the gloves, have one stand at your left hand and one at your right and say, "Now a good rule in boxing is, always keep smiling. Start smiling now—both of you—that's right. Strike any place above the belt. As soon as I say, 'Whoa,' both of you stop quickly. All right, one for the money, two for the show, three to make ready and four to—GO!"

Laugh and clap your hands—make them think they are having a wonderful time—and, in about one minute, before either of them has time to become angry, say loudly, "Whoa," quickly separating them if necessary. Say, "That's great! We'll rest a minute and then do it again." Have all the boys sit down with you and immediately take advantage of this ideal opportunity to lodge proper suggestions.

Say, "Now, that's the right way to box. Always keep smiling and show that you are real sports. You know boxing is the best thing in the world to develop self-control in a man. Some boys try getting angry the first time or two they box, but they soon learn that's not the right spirit at all."

Fifteen or twenty minutes with the gloves is enough for one time. Quit before the boys get tired, so they will like to do it again. In these meetings from time to time, you can virtually train the whole group in self-control. Between bouts, give them your ideas about when it is right to fight and when it is wrong. Tell them it is right to try to defend a weaker person against anyone who intends doing harm. The weaker person may be a woman or an elderly man or a little girl or boy. The boys will agree with you when you tell them they should whip the bully every time.

Just after giving the boys your idea about when it is right to fight, is the ideal time to tell them when it is wrong.

Tell them that it is cowardly to fight for a selfish reason. It is only the coward who holds revenge and wants to whip everybody who makes a "face" at him or makes remarks or tries to whip others just to show he is big enough. The really brave man never picks a quarrel and he just laughs at those who try to make him lose his self-control.

Many parents make the mistake of talking to the boy just after an offense, which, of course, is the wrong time. The best solution to the problem of fighting is to keep the child's mind and body occupied with interesting activity and to instil the correct ideals in the manner suggested.



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